

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L CARACAS 6837

FROM US DEL LOS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PLOS

SUBJECT: LOS: ARCHIPELAGO DISCUSSIONS WITH BAHAMAS

1. MEMBERS OF THE U.S. ARCHIPELAGO TEAM MET WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF THE BAHAMAS ON JULY 18, 1974 AT THE U.S. OFFICE NO. 2 TO DISCUSS U.S. AND BAHAMIAN ARCHIPELAGO CONCEPTS. THE PARTICIPANTS INCLUDED:

U.S.: PROF. JOHN N. MOORE; MYRON N. NORDQUIST; ROBERT D. HODGSON.

THE BAHAMAS: FOREIGN MINISTER P.L. ADERLEY; GEORGE P. STEWARD, FIRST ASST. SEC.; DAVID HEPBURN, BAHAMAS MEA MISSION TO TH UN; PROF. D.P. O'CONNELL, CONSULTANT.

2. PROF. MOORE OPENED MEETING WITH A DETAILED EXPLANATION OF U.S. EFFORTS TO COME TO AN EQUITABLE ARRANGEMENT WITH PRINCIPAL ARCHIPELAGO
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STATES BY CREATION OF ARCHIPELAGO CHAPTER FOR LOS TREATY. HE FURTHER NOTED THAT THESE CONVERSATIONS HAD PRODUCED RESULTS IN AN OBJECTIVE DEFINITION OF AN ARCHIPELAGO AND FOR CREATION OF SATISFACTORY PASSAGE REGIME. AS CORRELATIVE POINT, UNITED STATES REQUIRED ACTIVE SUPPORT ARCHIPELAGIC STATES IN PROMOTION OF STRAITS REGIME OF UNIMPEDED TRANSIT AS PART OF TOTAL PACKAGE OF DEVELOPING SATISFACTORY ARCHIPELAGIC REGIME.

3. PROF. MOORE GAVE TO BAHAMAS REPS COPY OF LATEST U.S. PAPER ON ARCHIPELAGO PRINCIPLE AND NOTED ITS CONFIDENTIAL NATURE. PROF. MOORE CONCLUDED WITH REMARKS ON RESULTS OF CONSULTATIONS WITH MAJOR MARITIME POWERS AND WITH OTHER INTERESTED PARTIES IN THE NEGOTIATIONS

GENERAL DESIRE OF THIS GROUP TO RESTRICT ARCHIPELAGIC PRINCIPLE'S APPLICATION WAS STRESSED.

4. DISCUSSION THEN TURNED TO EFFECTS OF U.S. PROPOSALS ON THE BAHAMAS WERE PRELIMINARY DUE TO LACK OF LARGE-SCALE CHARTS IN CARACAS

HOWEVER, LAND/WATER RATIO OF ENTIRE BAHAMIAN AREA WAS NOTED TO BE LESS THAN 1:20, FAR BELOW THE MINIMUM LEVEL PERMITTED IN U.S. PROPOSAL. A CLUSTER COULD BE DEVELOPED ABOUT CENTRAL ISLANDS OF THE ARCHIPELAGO BUT EVEN THIS AREA HAD RATIO LESS THAN THE MINIMUM LIMIT. IT WAS STRESSED THAT CALCULATIONS WERE PRELIMINARY AND SHOULD NOT BE CONSIDERED BINDING.

5. FOREIGN MINISTER THEN ADVANCED BAHAMIAN CONCEPT OF ARCHIPELAGO. WHEN ASKED HOW THEY ENVISIONED ITS APPLICATION TO THE BAHAMAS, MINISTER ADERLEY DREW A PENCIL LINE ENCLOSING THE ENTIRE ARCHIPELAGO EXCEPT FOR CAY SAL GROUP IN SOUTHWEST. IN THE WEST, THE QUOTE BASELINES UNQUOTE COINCIDED WITH 200 METER WESTERN LIMIT OF THE GRAND BHAMAS BANK. HE CAREFULLY CONSTRUCTED LINE IN THIS AREA. ELSEWHERE, HE CHANGED LIMITS AND NOTED THAT THE GOB DID NOT REALLY CARE ABOUT THE DETAILS. HE NOTED THAT PROBLEMS OF BAHAMAS INVOLVED: (1) NEGOTIATIONS OF CONTINENTAL SHELF BOUNDARIES WITH CUBA AND THE UNITED STATES, (2) INTERNAL SECURITY IN GRAND BAHAMAS GROUP AND PERHAPS OTHERS, AND (3) SURVEILLANCE AND ADMINISTRATION IN AREA OF ALTERNATING HIGH SEAS AND TERRITORIAL SEAS.

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(1) QUESTION OF LIMITS. THE FOREIGN MINISTER REFLECTED AN OBVIOUS CONCERN THAT LOS CONVENTION WILL LEAD TO DISCOUNTING OF SMALL ISLANDS AS BASEPOINTS IN DEVELOPMENT OF NATIONAL BOUNDARIES. IN SPITE OF COUNTERVAILING ARGUMENTS CONCERNING EXISTING SUPPORT OF HIS POSITION VIS-A-VIS CUBA, HE HELD THAT ONLY ARCHIPELAGIC LINES WOULD GUARANTEE THE INVIOABILITY OF BAHAMAS BANKS. HIS ANALYSIS OF THE U.S. LAND/WATER RATIO CONCERNED THE REMOVAL OF EXTENSIVE AREAS OF HIGH SEAS BY ARCHIPELAGIC LIMITS. HE STRESSED OVER AND OVER THAT THE BAHAMAS

CONSIDERED THE GRAND BAHAMAS BANK AND OTHERS TO BE QUOTE LAND UNQUOTE IN THAT THEY WERE NOT HIGH SEAS IN SENSE OF BEING NAVIGABLE. CONCEPT WAS SUPPORTED BY PROF. O'CONNELL WHO ADDED THAT GEOGRAPHY WAS THE NAME OF THE GAME.

(2) INTERNAL SECURITY PROBLEMS. FOREIGN MINISTER STRESSED THAT HE COULD NOT ACCEPT ANY ARCHIPELAGIC SYSTEM WHICH INCLUDED NEW PROVIDENCE BUT WHICH EXCLUDED GRAND BAHAMAS AND GREAT ABACO ISLANDS. HE STATED THAT THESE ISLANDS COULD PROBABLY SURVIVE OUTSIDE POLITICAL FRAMEWORK OF OTHER ISLANDS AND LOCAL SEPARATISM WOULD SEIZE UPON SUCH A SYSTEM TO SUPPORT THAT THEY WERE DIFFERENT FROM THE REMAINING AREA. U.S. REPS INDICATED THEY WOULD EXAMINE POSSIBILITY OF SINGLE SYSTEM WHICH WOULD JOIN TWO UNITS. TO THIS FOREIGN MINISTER REPLIED ARCHIPELAGIC SYSTEM MUST INCLUDE ALL ISLANDS. (NOTE: WE BELIEVE HIS ORIGINAL OUTLINE OF LIMITS EXCLUDED CAY SAL GROUP DELIBERATELY.)

(3) JURISDICTION PROBLEMS. BAHAMIAN DELEGATION NOTED PROBLEMS CAUSED BY 12-MILE TERRITORIAL SEA MEASURED FROM EACH ISLAND AS A RESULT OF DISTRIBUTION OF ISLANDS. TONGUES OF HIGH SEAS WOULD EXTEND DEEPLY INTO AND BETWEEN ISLANDS MAKING (FOR GOB) A NIGHTMARE OF JURISDICTION. FOREIGN MINISTER NOTED OVER AND OVER AGAIN BAHAMIAN PROBLEMS WITH CUBAN-AMERICANS FISHING AND WITH ANTI-CASTRO ACTIVITIES

HE BITTERLY STATED THAT GOB DID NOT RECEIVE MUCH ASSISTANCE FROM U.S. IN SOLUTION OF THESE PROBLEMS. MINISTER ADERLEY FURTHER CLAIMED THAT SINGLE CLUSTER OF U.S. SYSTEM WOULD NOT ASSIST THE BAHAMAS IN THIS PARTICULAR PROBLEM SINCE IT WOULD NOT INCREASE THE TERRITORIAL SEA. U.S. TEAM, HOWEVER, MAINTAINED THAT IT WOULD BE OF VALUE ALTHOUGH IT WOULD NOT ADMITTEDLY SOLVE ALL THE BAHAMAS PROBLEMS.

6. THROUGHOUT ENTIRE DISCUSSIONS BAHAMAS TEAM STRESSED THEY HAD NO INTENTION OF INTERFERING WITH NAVIGATION THROUGHOUT NATURAL PASSAGES OF ARCHIPELAGO. THEY STATED THAT THESE WERE PROVIDENCE CONFIDENTIAL

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CHANNEL, CROOKED ISLAND PASSAGE AND MAYAGUANA PASSAGE. ALL INDICATIONS WERE THAT GOB WOULD ACCEPT U.S. TRANSIT REGIME.

7. IN CLOSING PROF. MOORE EXPRESSED FEELING THAT U.S. WISHED TO ACCOMMODATE ARCHIPELAGIC STATES IF PRINCIPLE CAN BE RESTRICTED TO FEW STATES WHICH WARRANT TREATMENT AND IF PROPER REGIME OF TRANSIT CAN BE NEGOTIATED. THE UNITED STATES, HOWEVER, IS UNDER TIME PRESSURE TO COMPLETE THE NEGOTIATIONS AND MUST EITHER SUPPORT OR REJECT THE PROPOSALS. HE SUGGESTED THAT WE REEXAMINE OUR LARGE-SCALE CHARTS (WHICH ARE ENROUTE CARACAS) AND CONTACT BAHAMIAN DELEGATION AGAIN IN NEAR FUTURE. IT WAS AGREED THAT WE WOULD CONTINUE OUR CONVERSATIONS AND GOB DELEGATION AGREED TO SHOW TO U.S. THEIR ARCHIPELAGO DRAFT WHEN IT IS COMPLETED. FOREIGN MINISTER IMPLIED

THAT DRAFT WAS QUOTE IN THE TYPEWRITER UNQUOTE AT PRESENT TIME. IN
DEPARTING HE RESTATED THAT THE IMPLICATIONS OF THEIR PRINCIPLES WORLD
NOT IMPINGE ON THE RIGHTS OF MARITIME NATIONS TO MAINTAIN TRANSIT
THROUGH ARCHIPELAGO PASSAGES. HE REITERATED THAT QUOTE LOSS UNQUOTE
OF THE BANKS WOULD HAVE NO EFFECT ON TRANSIT SINCE THEY WERE NON-
NAVIGABLE TO ALL BUT PLEASURE CRAFTS.
STEVENSON

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